



In the Matter of:

Wireline Competition Bureau Seeking Comments on E-rate Category Two) WC Docket No. 13-184

These comments are respectfully submitted by the Louisville Free Public Library, which is an 18 location public library system serving the students, residents, and employees of Metro Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky. The library serves a population of 765,352 with total operating revenues of \$18,912,323. There are 801 public computers on the library network that offer internet and other technology access to library patrons. We are pleased to be able to provide input on the impact of having access to secure and sufficient funding for our library WiFi and internal connections.

Our comments generally take the position that the cost of acquiring and delivering the necessary Internet Bandwidth to support library services equitably is the single greatest financial challenge with respect to library technology. This is already true and as the need for greater bandwidth continues to escalate the rate at which the costs become prohibitive will accelerate. And so we argue that maintaining funding for Category 2 services as adopted during the 2014 modernization is of great importance to public libraries.

Before the E-rate Modernization in 2014, virtually no libraries received funds for then, Priority 2 services. Unless we were at a 90% discount rate, we could assume there would be no funding left after all requests for internet access were funded. USAC data shows that most libraries are eligible for a 70% discount or less and according to the American Library Association, many libraries stopped bothering to apply for WiFi funding. Some states have reported that none of their libraries have received WiFi funds since the beginning of the E-rate program.

In communities across the country, people turn to the library to use our WiFi on their tablets, laptops, and other devices. Library computer users are downloading job applications, applying for financial aid, seeking health information, and communicating with family - all dependent on a strong WiFi signal. Increasingly, libraries also provide services that depend on WiFi, like coding clubs for K12 youth. Libraries everywhere know WiFi throughout the library is not a "nice to have" - it's a core community service.

With the commitment of the FCC to ensure a library budget of \$2.30 (\$5.00 for a selected category of larger urban and suburban libraries) per square foot, libraries can finally upgrade outdated equipment or plan for new construction. They have confidence that desperately needed support will be there.

Please maintain secure funding through the full five year budget period as adopted during the 2014 Modernization. Our communities depend on that funding.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Burchfield, Assistant Director
Louisville Free Public Library